

A Selection of Environmental News from Turkey

Polen Ekoloji Bulletin September 2025

2

At A Glance: Ecological Developments in September

September 2025 saw an escalation of projects across Turkey, including new mining, energy, and urban development initiatives that threatened forests, farmland, and water resources. Despite mounting public resistance and environmental risks, politically connected companies continued to expand operations under the guise of development and green transition.

4

On the Ground: A Selection of News

Across Turkey, new mines, energy plants, and construction projects escalated environmental harm, triggering protests and court battles as forests, rivers, and farmlands facing threats.

I.

At A Glance: Ecological Developments in September

Mining Activities

September saw a surge in new mining and drilling projects across Turkey, often targeting forests, farmland, and water basins. The Ministry of Environment initiated or approved multiple EIA processes, even in areas previously rejected by courts.

- **Mining expansion accelerated** in regions such as [Madra Dağı \(İzmir–Balıkesir\)](#), [Cabar Dağı \(Şırnak\)](#), [Ordu](#), [Giresun](#), and [Aydın](#), where companies seek to extract antimony, gold, copper, and petroleum.
- **Environmental risks intensified**, with several projects located near [drinking water sources](#) and forest ecosystems. In [Giresun’s Harşit Valley](#), the overflow of a chemical waste pond revealed the ongoing pollution linked to existing mines.
- **Politically connected and large-scale companies**, including [Alagöz Madencilik](#), [Cengiz Holding](#), and [Koza Altın](#), continued to operate despite environmental fines and widespread criticism.
- **Communities and local governments mobilized**, filing lawsuits and organizing demonstrations to oppose new mining licenses. Protests in [Çanakkale](#) echoed the slogan “Toprağımızı vermiyoruz” (“We won’t give our land”).
- [Workers in mining towns like Soma](#) faced wage cuts and layoffs as the coal industry contracted, exposing the social and economic instability of Turkey’s extractivist model.



Deforestation in İkizköy, Akbelen.

Energy Projects

September witnessed a wave of new energy projects across Turkey, spanning solar (GES), wind (RES), hydroelectric (HES), and geothermal developments.

- Major companies—including Limak, Cengiz Holding, and Nesma Enerji—received ÇED exemptions or approvals for large-scale solar and wind projects in [Ankara](#), [Manisa](#), [Balıkesir](#), [Muğla](#), and [Çankırı](#). These projects often overlapped with zeytinlik (olive groves) and burned forest areas, raising concerns over land use and post-fire exploitation.
- Hydroelectric plants (HES) continued to cause severe ecological damage, particularly in [Diyarbakır's Kulp Çayı](#), where water flow nearly stopped due to diversion for power generation. Local residents in [Dicle Havzasi](#), [Sason \(Batman\)](#) and [Arhavi \(Artvin\)](#) resisted new HES plans, blocking company meetings and defending rivers essential for agriculture, tourism, and aquatic biodiversity.
- Geothermal expansion also advanced, with the government announcing new exploration and operating tenders covering more than 30,000 hectares in [Eskişehir](#), further extending industrial activity into rural lands.

Environmental Degradation

- Across Turkey, urban expansion and construction projects continued to devastate natural ecosystems. New TOKİ housing developments and quarry operations encroached on water basins, forests, and rural lands. In [Istanbul's Sazlıdere](#), thousands of new housing units were planned within a critical water basin, while [Eyüpsultan's Çiftalan village](#) and [Hakkari's Semzinan](#) faced extensive quarry blasting and forest loss. In [Van](#) and [Şırnak](#), municipal and state-led projects caused widespread tree felling and landscape destruction.
- Reports of widespread tree cutting and forest clearing emerged from [Batman](#), [Adıyaman](#), [Şırnak](#), and [Amed](#). Many incidents were linked to kayyum administrations, TOKİ projects, and tourism development plans, revealing the systematic conversion of forests into construction and investment zones. In Karadağ Kent Ormanı (Adıyaman), trees were cut for new housing and road building; in Gabar and Dorşin, logging continued under the guise of security and economic projects. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism's plan to open public forest land in [Antalya](#) for hotel construction underscored the growing commodification of nature.



II. On the Ground: A Selection of News

The monthly Polen Ekoloji Bulletin in English comprises a selection of news on environmental destruction and environmentalist resistance from the more comprehensive monthly bulletin in Turkish. Both bulletins are available [here](#).

Mining Projects

16.09.2025

New threat in Mount Gabar: 114 new drilling wells

Şırnak

[Mezopotamya Agency](#)

It has been revealed that, in addition to the 99 oil drilling wells currently operating in Mount Gabar, 114 more wells are planned to be opened. So far, hundreds of thousands of trees have been cut down under the pretext of oil exploration, and many areas have been destroyed with dynamite. Alongside oil exploration, the construction of military outposts, towers, and roads has turned the mountain into a site of widespread ecological destruction.

18.09.2025

Third positive EIA approval for gold mine at Çanakkale's only drinking water source

Çanakkale

[Evrensel](#)

The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change (MoEUCC) granted a positive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) decision for the gold-silver mine that Koza Gold Operations aims to operate near the villages of Serçiler and Terziler in Çanakkale. The project is located within the protection basin of the Atikhisar Dam, Çanakkale's only drinking water source. The mine project had twice been annulled by court decisions on the grounds that "the licensed area lies within the protection and water collection zone of the Atikhisar Dam."

21.09.2025

Chemical waste pond of AKP MP's mine overflows

Giresun

[ETHA](#)

The chemical waste pond belonging to Alagöz Mining Company, owned by AKP Iğdır MP Cantürk Alagöz, overflowed in Giresun's Harşit Valley following heavy rainfall. Images documented that the chemical waste mixed into the soil and water sources. It was noted that the company had built illegal waste ponds before the EIA process was finalized, that pollution in the nearby Derin Stream had been detected in 2024 samples, and that the Ministry of Environment had repeatedly fined the company (most recently 464,585 TL).

22.09.2025

A new era of plunder in the Soma mining basin

Manisa

[Evrensel](#)

In Soma, one of Turkey's most important coal basins, miners are being forced to work for half wages, justified by the shutdown of the thermal power plant and reduced state subsidies. Companies such as İmbat and Yeni Anadolu are accused of underpaying wages, while thousands of miners face the threat of dismissal. Employers are reportedly lobbying to maintain the Turkish Coal Enterprise (TKİ) purchase guarantee and using low wages as a bargaining tool. Mining engineers warn that unplanned energy policies and declining lignite demand have deepened the crisis, while unions display varying stances. Workers call for collective struggle amid uncertainty and livelihood hardship.

23.09.2025

United against the gold mine project: “We will not give up our land!”

Çanakkale

[İklim Haber](#)

The Çanakkale Municipality, civil society organizations, and local residents are filing a joint lawsuit to annul the positive EIA decision granted for the gold mining project planned within the Atikhisar Dam protection area.

Cengiz Holding’s mine dries up ponds

Mardin

[Evrensel](#)

Due to the operations of Cengiz Holding’s Eti Bakır company in Mazıdağı, Mardin, ponds in the region are drying up. Residents report that the trees in their orchards and vineyards are also beginning to wither.

Koza Gold Operations poisoning Diyadin!

Ağrı

[Evrensel](#)

Koza Gold Operations’ exploration activities in Ağrı’s Diyadin district cover 470 hectares, posing a major risk to the Murat River.

Protest in front of the ministry against copper mine project

Ankara

[ETHA](#)

The Boyabat Environmental Platform (BOY-ÇEP) held a press statement in front of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, chanting “We won’t give up our land” and “There is no life without nature.” They warned that the copper mine project planned by Eti Bakır A.Ş. in Sinop’s Boyabat district, covering an area equivalent to 196 football fields, threatens the agricultural irrigation of six villages as well as Boyabat’s drinking water and the Gökırmak-Kızılırmak basins. BOY-ÇEP spokesperson Bilal Tıgılı stated that if the project proceeds, 13 million tons of soil will be displaced annually, millions of tons of chemical and heavy metal waste will be stored in ponds, and 250,000 trees will be cut down. “The people’s right to clean drinking water is far more valuable than copper,” he said, emphasizing opposition to the replication of Cengiz Holding’s ecological destruction seen in other regions.

25.09.2025

AKP’s Alagöz to drill for new mine in Giresun

Giresun

[ETHA](#)

Alagöz Mining, owned by AKP Iğdır MP Cantürk Alagöz, has launched the EIA process to conduct trenching and drilling for mining in 49 locations within two polygons spanning the Görele and Tirebolu districts of Giresun. The company, which holds a mining exploration license valid between December 6, 2024, and 2031, plans exploration over 40 hectares within its 13,846-hectare licensed area. The Provincial Directorate of Environment declared the project “outside EIA scope.” The exploration areas include forests, farmland, and regions with unique local crops and rivers. Meanwhile, Favori Metal Madencilik has also initiated an EIA process in Bulancak’s Döngeri village for copper, lead, and zinc mining on agricultural and pasture lands, located very close to stream beds and settlements.

Energy Projects

01.09.2025

Limak's new plunder plan: Farmlands to disappear

Ankara

[BirGün](#)

A “no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) required” decision was issued by the Ankara Governorship for a solar power plant (SPP) project to be established on 56,633 square meters of agricultural land. The company claims the electricity generated will be used for its own consumption, while local villagers have reacted strongly, saying the project “will take the bread out of the farmers’ hands.”

11.09.2025

12 geothermal exploration and 2 operation fields to be auctioned

Eskişehir

[Evrensel](#)

According to a decision published in the Official Gazette, a total of 31,714 hectares of land in Eskişehir will be put up for auction for geothermal exploration and operation rights.

Environmental Degradation

27.09.2025

Protest against trustee's tree massacre

Van

[ETHA](#)

The Van Ecology Association (EKO-DER) protested against the trustee appointed to Van Metropolitan Municipality for cutting down dozens of trees in Newroz Park under the pretext of “road expansion.” During a press statement in the park, held under a banner reading “War is the greatest ecological destruction,” EKO-DER Co-chair Dilek Akdağ emphasized that cutting down trees without any relocation process, scientific assessment, or environmental impact analysis constitutes irreversible environmental destruction and ecosystem collapse. She called for an immediate end to environmental damage and stated that the association would closely monitor the legal process.

Climate Crisis

20.09.2025

Forest fire in Alanya

Antalya

[ETHA](#)

In Antalya's Alanya district, about 30 homes in the Şihlar neighborhood were evacuated due to forest fires, and one person affected by smoke was hospitalized. The fire, which started in Yaylakonak and spread rapidly with the wind, was battled from the ground throughout the night and from the air in the morning. While the fire that started in Aliefendi and spread to İspatlı was brought under control, it was reported that the blaze in Kargıcak was partially contained and cooling efforts were ongoing.

15 families evacuated due to heavy rainfall

Rize

[ETHA](#)

Heavy rain that continued overnight in Rize caused landslides, road collapses, and flooding in the Ardeşen, Fındıklı, Kalkandere, and Çamlıhemşin districts. The road to Ayder Plateau in Çamlıhemşin was closed to traffic, and a bridge on the Ardeşen–Çamlıhemşin highway collapsed as water levels rose. Residents trapped in their homes in Ardeşen's Tunca town were rescued by construction vehicles, and 15 families in Fındıklı were evacuated as a precaution due to overflowing rivers. According to AFAD, the highest rainfall in the past 24 hours was recorded at 161.8 mm in İkizdere Çağrankaya Plateau, and precipitation continues intermittently across the province.

Animal Rights

27.09.2025

Reaction to roundup of stray animals in Adana

Adana

[ETHA](#)

Adana Animal Rights Defenders held a press statement in İnönü Park to protest the Governor's order to collect stray animals across the city. Lawyer Sevil Aracı, speaking on behalf of the group, described the practice as “a clear threat and violation of the right to life,” emphasizing that the current conditions in shelters amount to “sending animals to their deaths.”



Environmental defenders in front of the Constitutional Court, Ankara

Environmental Resistance

05.09.2025

Climate Justice Coalition: We will not remain silent about the crime of ecocide

[ETHA](#)

The Climate Justice Coalition emphasized in its statement that the natural and social destruction caused under the crime of “ecocide” cannot be met with silence. The coalition warned against practices that legitimize ecological destruction and devastate nature, water, soil, and living spaces. They called on both the public and authorities to act to prevent further damage, demanding the protection of environmental rights, sustainability of ecosystems, and adherence to climate justice principles.

09.09.2025

İkizköy villagers resist the uprooting of olive trees: “We won’t let a single olive tree be removed!”

Muğla

[Sendika.Org](#)

In the village of İkizköy (Akbelen area) in Muğla, residents gathered to protest against the threat to uproot their olive trees for counting and relocation, declaring, “We won’t let a single olive tree be removed!” Company representatives left the area as villagers shouted, “This village isn’t your private estate!” expressing their determination to defend their land.

10.09.2025

Deştin village head reports villagers opposing cement factory: “Report the companies, not the villagers”

Muğla

[Sendika.Org](#)

In Deştin village in Muğla’s Yatağan district, where a court had halted construction of a cement factory, the local headman, Nail Karaman, faced backlash for reporting villagers who opposed the hiring of workers for the project. In a press statement, locals declared, “He will go down in history as the headman who reported his own villagers defending their water, forest, and land.” They stated that the headman had failed his public duty, served corporate interests, and disrupted social peace in the village, announcing that they would file complaints with the district governor’s office, the governorate, and the prosecutor’s office.

12.09.2025

YK Energy arrives for olive counting in İzkizky Akbelen

Muğla

Sendika.Org

In İzkizky Akbelen, Milas district of Muğla, villagers resisted YK Energy, a joint venture of Limak and İtaş, after the company entered olive groves to conduct a “pre-removal count” under the Mining Law. Reminding that they have filed a lawsuit together with ten neighboring villages, the villagers declared: “The mining law passed in Parliament is invalid for us. We will never allow a single olive tree to be removed. This land belongs to us, not to corporations.”

14.09.2025

Protest against new industrial facility: “Enough! We want life, not industry”

Kocaeli

Sendika.Org

Residents of Kayapınar neighborhood in Kocaeli’s Dilovası district held a press statement with the slogan “Enough! We want life, not industry,” protesting a new industrial facility planned in their neighborhood. They highlighted the years of noise, smoke, and pollution caused by existing factories. Muhtar Mehmet Kara and residents emphasized that factories threaten children’s health, living spaces, and future, calling on authorities and the public to support their just struggle.

15.09.2025

Environmental defenders take to the streets for İzkizky

Istanbul

Sendika.Org

In reaction to the detention of villagers opposing tree cutting in İzkizky, Milas, environmental defenders gathered in Kadıky at the call of the “We Won’t Give Up Our Land” Istanbul Campaign Group. They declared that the legislation known as the Mining Law, Olive Grove Law, or “Super Permit” is in fact an “occupation law,” stating, “The occupation began in Akbelen.” They urged the Constitutional Court to repeal the law, arguing that it opens forests, water basins, olive groves, and farmland to corporate exploitation, worsening water scarcity and food inflation, and threatening the survival of 48 villages in the region.

Gendarmerie enters İzkizky at dawn, starts cutting olive trees

Muğla

Sendika.Org

Villagers protested as YK Energy (a Limak–İtaş partnership) began cutting olive trees in Akbelen. Villagers said trucks, cutting crews, and gendarmerie forces had entered early in the morning. During the gendarmerie attack, headwoman Nejla Işık and villagers Halil, Seçil, and Serpil Şallı were detained and released three hours later.

17.09.2025

Environmental defenders in front of the Constitutional Court

Ankara

Sendika.Org

A total of 266 members of parliament applied to the Constitutional Court to annul the so-called “Super Plunder” law, which opens forests, olive groves, pastures, farmland, and water resources to mining and energy projects. Environmental defenders gathered in front of the court at the call of the “We Won’t Give Up Our Land” campaign. Representatives from CHP, DEM, EMEP, TİP, and SOL Party called for the repeal of the law, which they said violates nature, public health, and the right to life. Environmental and ecology organizations, as well as professional chambers from across Turkey, supported the protest, declaring, “We will protect our land, our water, and our homeland.”



Support from Denizli for Akbelen



Support from Istanbul for Akbelen



Support from Eskisehir for Akbelen



Support from lawyers for Akbelen

18.09.2025

Support from Denizli for Akbelen: “Those who despise nature endanger the future”

Denizli

[ETHA](#)

Environmental organizations, professional chambers, and locals in Denizli held a press statement under the slogan “We defend our olive groves, our land, and our future,” protesting the uprooting of olive trees in Akbelen and the exploitation of nature for profit. The statement, organized by the Denizli Bar Environmental Commission, TMMOB, Büyük Menderes Initiative, and Denizli Labor and Democracy Platform, emphasized that coal mining and thermal power plants threaten public health and the rights of future generations, calling on the Constitutional Court to repeal Law No. 7554, known as the “super permit law.” They demanded an immediate end to the occupation of Akbelen and other living spaces.

Lawyers visit İkizköy: “We will continue our struggle to protect our forests, olive groves, and soil”

Muğla

[Sendika.Org](#)

Bar presidents and lawyers from the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and neighboring provinces visited the Akbelen resistance site in İkizköy, Milas, to conduct on-site inspections. Village headwoman Nejla Işık explained that mining operations have destroyed olive groves, freshwater basins, and cultural heritage sites in Işıkdere, forcing villagers into drought and displacement. Bar presidents condemned the “super plunder” law enacted under the mining and olive legislation, stating that destroying olive groves for coal mining devastates nature, public health, and living environments. They called on the Constitutional Court to repeal the law and vowed to “continue the struggle to protect our remaining forests, olive groves, and soil.”

19.09.2025

Polen Ecology Collective: We will strengthen environmental resistance against attacks
Antakya

[ETHA](#)

In Samandağ, Antakya, Samandağ Ecology Group spokesperson Mevlüt Oruç was assaulted by the partner of a closed concrete plant and his associates, while on the same day, the Gökçeyazı Türkmen Mountain Environmental Protection and Solidarity Association building in Balıkesir was stoned. Following these attacks, both occurring after local victories against mining and plant projects, Polen Ecology Collective released a statement condemning the violence: “As company owners turn into gangs targeting nature defenders, we will continue to strengthen solidarity and expand the environmental struggle.”

24.09.2025

Ecologists: “For lasting peace, make peace with nature”

Ankara

[ETHA](#)

A total of 86 ecological organizations, including Tarım Orkam-Sen, EKO-DER, and various platforms, submitted their “Peace with Nature Report” to the DEM Party Ecology Commission, documenting ecological destruction carried out in Kurdistan for 50 years under the guise of “security.” At a press conference held at Tarım Orkam-Sen, it was noted that the report records village evacuations, security dams, forest fires, and ecosystem damage. The groups called for nature to be recognized as a legal subject, for ecological truth commissions to be established, for a full inventory of environmental damage, and for the responsible institutions to be held accountable. Emphasizing that destruction caused by conflict must be publicly documented through official means, they warned against corporations exploiting the peace process and declared, “There can be no lasting peace without peace with nature.” They also invited the public to the upcoming Olive and Peace Gathering in Muğla.



Saplings planted in Kurtdere, Antakya



Private lands entered under police escort in Antakya



Construction machinery enters people's lands in Antakya



Samandağ Ecology Group spokesperson Mevlüt Oruç

24.09.2025

Company enters private lands under police escort

Antakya

[ETHA](#)

In Samandağ district of Antakya, villagers from Vakıflı, Hıdırbey, Mağaracık, and Kurtdere continue to resist as companies, under the pretext of building housing for earthquake victims, entered their titled lands and olive-citrus orchards, first with gendarmerie and now with police escort. Despite a court-ordered stay of execution, the company did not halt its work; tents were dismantled, and several people fell ill during the intervention. The villagers declared, “Enough TOKİ housing has been built for earthquake victims, anything beyond this is land seizure,” vowing to protect their land, trees, and living spaces and to maintain their watch until police and barricades are withdrawn. They demanded that earthquake victims in container cities be placed in already completed homes, that no additional housing be built, and that their legal rights be preserved.

28.09.2025

Saplings planted in place of uprooted trees in Kurtdere

Antakya

[ETHA](#)

In Kurtdere neighborhood of Samandağ, Hatay, resistance continues against the expropriation of earthquake victims’ titled lands through the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ). Residents planted saplings in place of the trees uprooted by the company that entered their land under police and gendarmerie escort, declaring, “They uprooted, we replanted.” In their statement, they emphasized, “We stand tall with our nature, our land, and our future.” The community also sent a solidarity message to the upcoming ecology rally in Muğla, stating, “We will not give up our rights, we will not give up our land,” and concluded with the words: “Today we planted saplings in Kurtdere; tomorrow we will plant hope across the entire city.”

Dispossession

02.09.2025

Construction machinery enters people’s titled lands under police escort

Antakya

[ETHA](#)

In Samandağ, Antakya, the entry of construction machinery, accompanied by police, onto people’s titled lands early in the morning sparked outrage. Residents stated that although there were many alternative sites for TOKİ housing construction, authorities had set their eyes on the seaside lands. They emphasized that mandarin trees were being cut down and declared, “They are turning the earthquake disaster into an opportunity, putting more burdens on our backs. We don’t want TOKİ forced upon us.” Locals said their lands were being handed over to businessmen for profit and expressed their determination by stating, “We are no longer afraid, the worst disaster has already happened to us.”

Destruction of Cultural Heritage

21.09.2025

Call to Varto Municipality: ‘End the work in Goşkar Valley’

Muş

[ETHA](#)

The Goşkar Ecology Association protested the attempt by Varto Municipality to divert the sacred spring Ağwa Sıpiye, located between the Goşkar Baba and Ana Fadile pilgrimage sites, both considered holy in the Alevi faith, through pipes to the district center. The association stated that the intervention carried out with construction machinery has caused serious harm to both the valley’s natural-ecological structure and to Alevi beliefs. They called on the municipality to act with reason, to listen to the voices of villagers and believers, and to immediately terminate the project with a clear public statement.

